



RMBS

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Brazilian Rain Tree - Christina Carfora Seaman

President's Message

by Paul Koenning

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Happy Holidays and Winter Bonsai Work

Everyone must be feeling the holiday spirit at this point! If you are struggling, fear not as the Rocky Mountain Bonsai Society's annual holiday celebration is right around the corner on Sunday December 3rd. Thank you so much to everyone who has RSVP'd, volunteered to bring a side dish, and volunteered to help out! Your efforts will ensure our celebration is a hit, and we have great items to be raffled, including pots, starter trees, tools, books, and even time with bonsai professionals. All the party details are included with this newsletter so that you have the details fresh and ready to go for party time!

This time of the year I have a frantic fall focus as you heard about last month, and then my outdoor bonsai are all tucked in and dormant for the winter season. My tropical bonsai tend to follow an opposite schedule as they come inside to my plant room and are irrigated by hand daily. This naturally increases the attention I give to my tropicals over the winter months because I see them, their issues, needs, and future design options each day while watering. While I do leave most of my tropical repotting for the summer months, having a high light quality, and an environmentally controlled plant room does allow for plenty of winter work on my tropical bonsai. This has been part of what keeps me coming back to tropical bonsai. They are wonderful at keeping the winter blues at bay!

There is one of my tropical bonsai in particular that has successfully taken my primary focus for this

winter. My *Chloroleucon tortum*, or Brazilian rain tree, that Christina Carfora sold to me is a true living sculpture in the making! I love the muscular and exfoliating nature of the bark on this species, as well as the tiny compound leaves similar to a locust in miniature form. This one has a fantastic trunk, that was clearly reduced in the field to transform this plant into a bonsai.

Those old pruning wounds have died back now, and on Brazilian rain trees the dead bark turns a slightly orange, brown color. This is great because it clearly illustrates where bark should be removed, but I have also found that the die back mimics the shape of tearaway wounds on large deciduous trees. With the shape determined it becomes easier to visualize how rot and nature would act upon the exposed surfaces. A Dremel tool with a brass or steel disk bit works great to remove the old bark and to help define the wood grain.

Now I need to state a few words of caution... Dremel tools can do some amazing detail work but are powerful tools that can cause injury if improperly used. In addition, most of the wood I work on with bonsai is dead wood enhancement not creation. In other words, I am working to enhance the dead wood already present, not creating large areas of dead wood. While dead wood can be created on trees, I have lost a few from taking that approach. Always remember you can always come back to carve more wood, but you cannot put it back. Unlike our bonsai tree canopies that we regularly prune back as they grow, dead wood is just that and will not regrow in future years. So be sure to wear your safety glasses, protective gloves are not a bad idea, and take your time and move slowly.

I previously mentioned a tearaway wound without explaining it. A tearaway wound is created when a large branch partially breaks and tears a large section of bark and wood down the branch or trunk line. This is incredibly common storm damage wound seen in Colorado, and I have attached a few

photo examples I was able to find from my work. While the type of wound is common, the resulting splintered wood, and eventually rot can be unique. With that said, rot typically progresses down a stem more than laterally, and knot holes/ old branch attachment points tend to be more dense wood that resists rot longer. On occasion I have found wood that has just begun to rot, and a steel wire disk bit on a Dremel easily removes the softened wood to create very natural looking carvings. More often than not, a carving bit will need to be used to help exaggerate caverns of rotting wood. The best teacher I have found to help inspire my deadwood carving is observing rotting trees and stumps in nature, and while I work. A fantastic book you all should own if possible is Bonsai Deadwood by Francois Jeker. Both the book and examples in nature bring quite a bit of depth to what is possible with deadwood on bonsai.

I still have a fair amount of carving to complete on this Brazilian rain tree, and plenty of winter to complete it in. After the freshly carved wood has seasoned for at least a few months, I will use lime sulfur with a bit of India ink to help bleach and grey the wood as nature does over time. I hope that some of this has proven useful to you! If you have related questions, or even new topics you would like covered please let me know at pjkoenning@gmail.com. I will be up early on December 3rd to slow cook a turkey for our celebration, so I hope to see you there! We can compare carving techniques for both bonsai and turkey!

Paul Koenning





Rocky Mountain Bonsai Societies' Holiday Celebration

Come join the fun and celebrate another wonderful year of bonsai!

This year the Party will be held on Sunday December 3rd from 9:00am until 12:30pm. Setup will begin at 9am, the **party will start around 10:30am**, and cleanup will start at 12:30pm. The party has moved locations to the Dakota Lodge located in the Ken Caryl Valley at, **14422 W. Ken Caryl Ave, Littleton, CO 80127**. The Dakota Lodge is located next to the equestrian center shown on the map below.

There will be plenty of items for new members in the raffle, as well as items worth bringing some money to place bids with. Come join in the holiday fun, fantastic food, action filled auction, and wonderful company!

Do you have a favorite side dish you would like to share? Please bring a salad, appetizer, side dish, or a desert to share. President Paul Koenning will be smoking a turkey, and Membership Chair Patrick Allen will be providing a ham for the membership. The club will also be providing drinks. We do ask that all attendees help with setup, food service, or teardown.

Thank you for the incredible response from our membership! I can not wait to see you all and enjoy your wonderful contributions to our holiday meal! Paul

Google Maps

Ken Caryl Ranch Dakota Lodge, 14422 W. Ken Caryl Ave (next to Equestrian Center)



MEMBERSHIP

By Patrick Allen – RMBS Membership Chair

New members continue to seek us out. We now have 156 members. Many are new to bonsai, others have had bonsai, but did not know about RMBS.

If you meet these new members at a RMBS event, please welcome them and see if they need any help with the Bonsai trees, tell them how you deal with Colorado's weather, or just share with them how you got started. They will appreciate the comradery and help!

Please welcome our new members:

Paul Croft (Longmont)

Tony Hernandez

Derrol Moorhead (Centennial)

Linda Campbell

Chris Smith (Denver)

Mike Wade (Denver)

Cameron Piper (Littleton)

Bill Coletta

Olivia Stockert (Denver)

Justin Morgan

RESOURCES FOR MEMBERS

[Rocky Mountain Bonsai Society | Facebook](#) Post and view photos from RMBS members, post questions, comment

[Rocky Mountain Bonsai Society Forum](#) RMBS website forum has articles of interest

[Rocky Mountain Bonsai Society \(@rocky_mountain_bonsai_society\) • Instagram photos and videos](#) View or post photos

[Rocky Mountain Bonsai Society - YouTube](#) RMBS meetings recorded appear here, other videos of interest including RMBS show

Rocky Mountain Bonsai Society Dues info.

Annual membership renewals are due July 1. Individual membership is \$50 per year, a family membership is \$75 per year.

Please create an account on the [RMbonsai.org website](#) under membership. Once you have entered your contact information you will be directed to the payment page where you can enter credit card information or use PayPal. Your account will then be active and will be the method for renewal next year.

If you have already paid your dues you will not be able to create an account on the website yet so don't worry about trying to do that yet.

[Rmbonsai.org](#) RMBS website – headers: News & Events, Galleries, Join, Blog, Forum, Education

Create account for membership renewal

Other resources

[Colorado Bonsai Ltd.](#)
[First Branch Bonsai](#)
[RMBS Facebook Page](#)

For those of you who want to pay by check - please send a check to:

Rocky Mountain Bonsai Society

c/o Membership Renewal PO BOX 2095 Littleton, CO. 80161 This is our new mailing address.

Please be sure to include your phone # & **email address** with your check so we've up to date contact info for you.

We also have the ability to take credit card payments live at our meetings. We have discontinued Venmo for on line payment.

2023 – 2024 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

Date and Location	Agenda or Program	Workshop
<u>ANNUAL SHOW</u>		
<u>December Monthly Meeting</u> <u>Sunday December 3 10:30 AM</u> Holiday party and auction See announcement below	<u>LUNCHEON, RAFFLE, AUCTION</u>	
<u>January Monthly Meeting</u> <u>January 8, 2024</u> Denver Botanic Gardens	<u>TOM ELIAS</u> <u>SUISEKI</u>	

Meeting Schedule for 2024.

The RMBS board of directors and the Program Chair Darrell Whitley are presently scheduling speakers and presentations for 2024. Currently there is discussions with Denver Botanic Gardens about our proposed meeting dates that hopefully will be resolved shortly. Our updated schedules will be posted on the RMBonsai.org website, and we will send out a notice regarding our 2024 meetings as soon as we have secured a firm date.



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We're located on the west side of the Denver Metro area, near I-70 and Youngfield.

Email us at: co.bonsai.ltd@gmail.com

